

Foster Care and Adoptive Options for Child Victims of Crime

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Legal Framework of the Child Welfare System

Make-up of the System

- State Level
 - States have primary responsibility for establishing the legal and administrative structures and programs to provide child welfare services.
 - The programs vary from state to state; and as a result, one state's program may differ significantly from another.
- Federal Level
 - The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the principle federal agency that regulates and funds child welfare programs.
 - The Department of Justice and seven other federal agencies also fund various child welfare-related programs.
 - The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (PL 96-272) established the framework for the modern child welfare system.

Stakeholders in the Child Welfare System

- Child Protective Services Agencies
- Juvenile/Family Courts
- Health/Mental Health/Other Service Providers
- Out of Home Care Providers
- Parents
- CHILDREN

How Kids Enter the Child Welfare System

- Reports of Abuse/Neglect (vast majority)
- Juvenile Delinquency Issues (a sometimes indirect route)
- Death of, or Abandonment by, Parent

What Happens to Kids in the Child Welfare System?

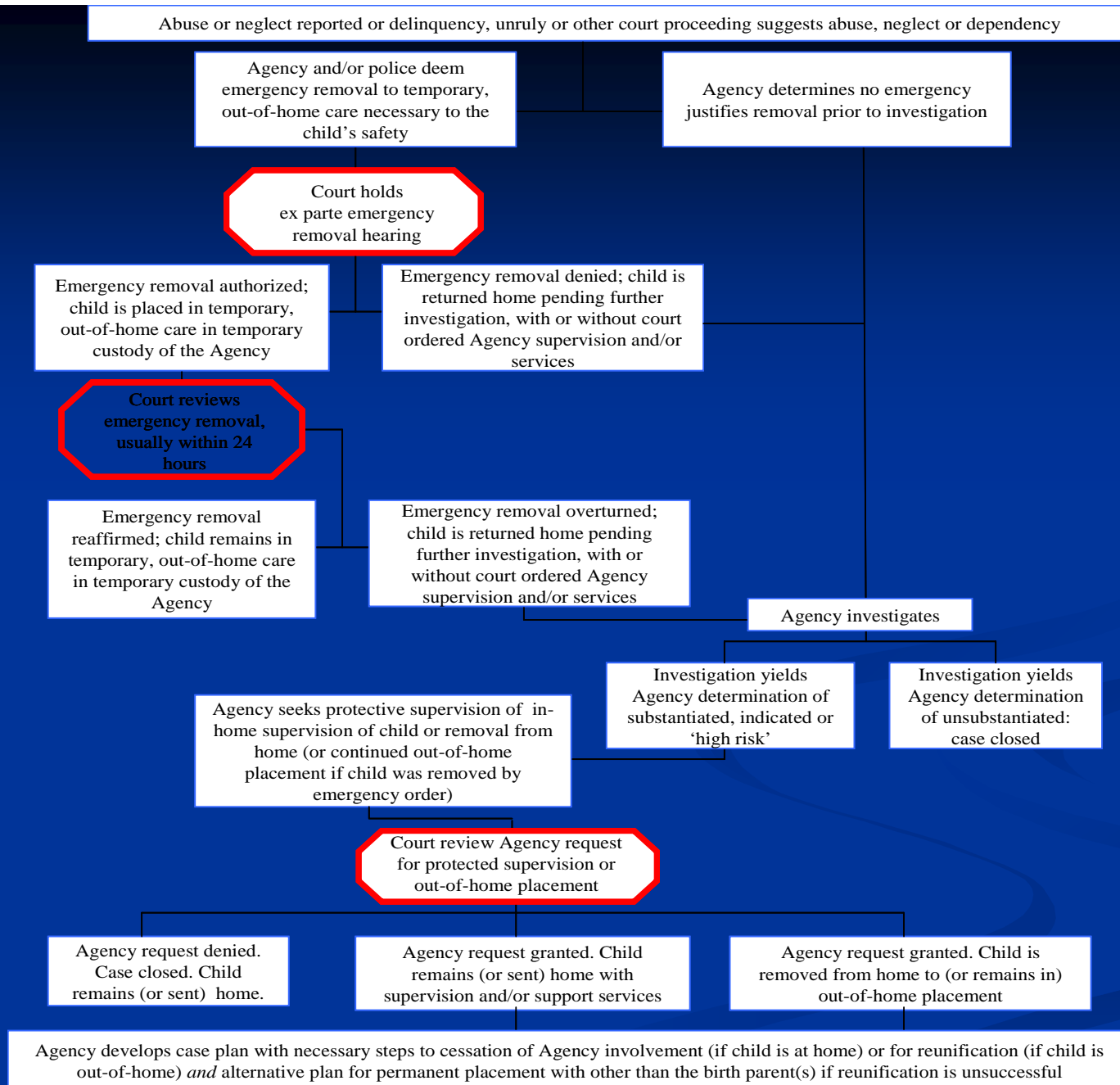
- A child's path through the child welfare system may be long and winding, with backward as well as forward progress.
- This path may, if all goes well, lead a child to a better, more stable and healthy relationship with the parent or primary caregiver.
- The path may also lead to an alternative permanent placement that is in the child's best interests.
- Wherever the path leads, the way is paved with legal proceedings, case requirements, and decision points.

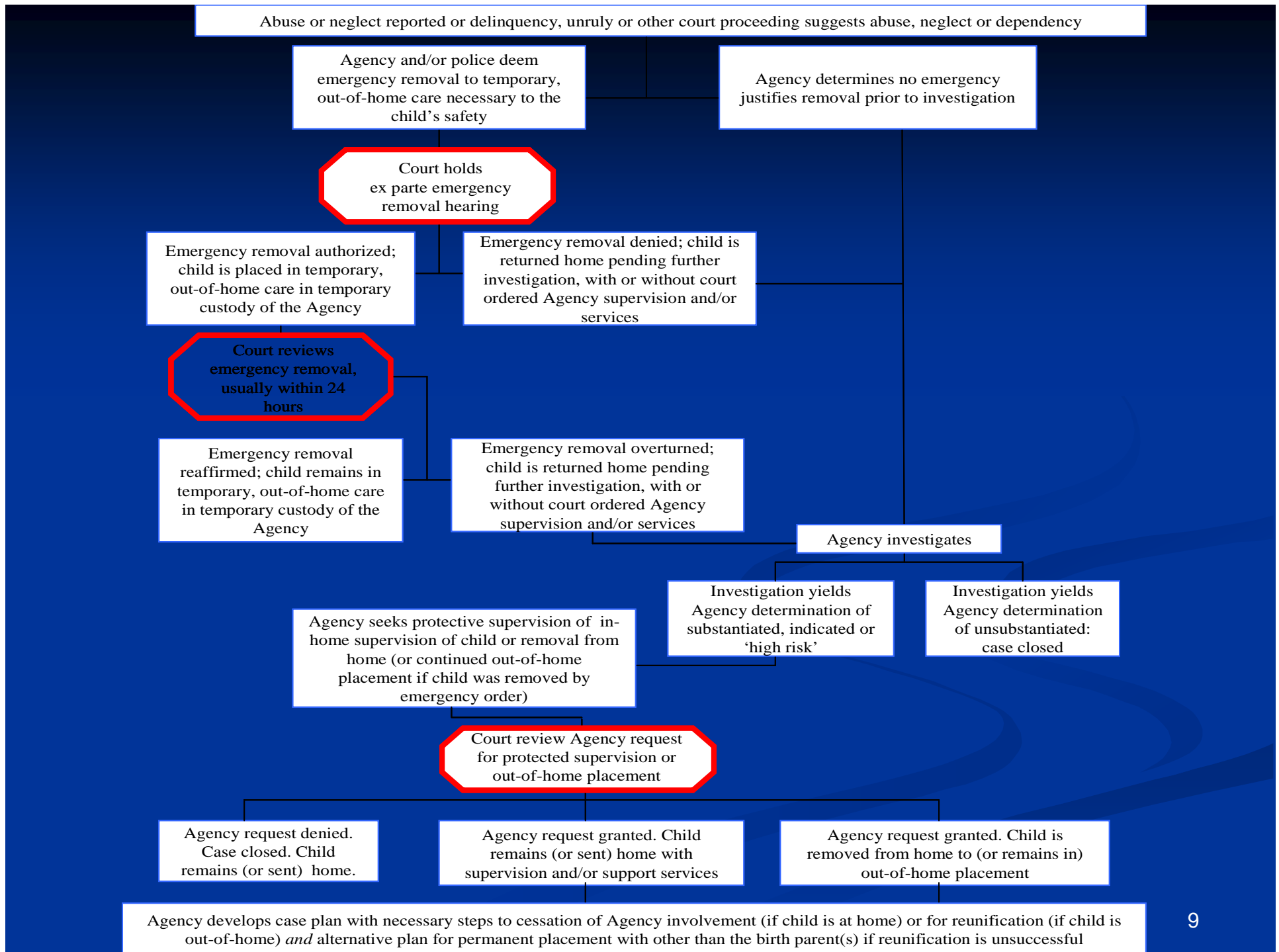
Proceedings in Child Welfare Cases

- **Protective/Shelter Hearing:** To determine whether child should be placed in emergency, temporary out-of-home care
- **Adjudicatory Hearing:** To determine if abuse or neglect did, in fact, occur.
- **Dispositional Hearing:** To determine where the child will live, who will have custody of the child, and what conditions govern the placement.
- **Periodic Reviews:** To review progress under the child's case plan (to occur at least every six months).
- **Permanency Hearing:** To approve a clear, definitive permanency plan for the child (to occur within 12 months of child's initial placement).
- **Termination of Parental Rights Hearing:** To determine whether the parent(s)' rights should be terminated (federal law generally requires states to initiate this process for any child who has been in foster care for 15 of the 22 months preceding the petition to TPR).
- **Adoption or Guardianship Hearing:** To make the child legally part of another family, either through adoption or other legal relationship such as custodianship or guardianship

Legal Processes in Child Welfare Cases

The following two slides illustrate paths a child may take through the child welfare system.





The Spectrum of Child Welfare Involvement in the Home

■ Overly Intrusive

- Unnecessary removal of children from their homes
- Unwarranted government intrusion into the family unit

■ Not Doing Enough

- Not intervening enough
- Intervening too late
- Protecting the rights of parents over children

■ Just Right

- Individualizing each child's needs and eventual results
- Viewing every family and child as unique and distinctive
- Focusing responding sensitively to each child's unique circumstance
- Understanding that one size does not fit all when it comes to a child's needs

Child Welfare Case Outcomes

Child Welfare agencies are required by federal law to measure their success in achieving the following outcomes:

- **Child safety.** Child safety is the paramount concern guiding child welfare practice. Many States, equate the evaluation of child safety to a determination whether a child is at imminent risk of serious harm.
- **Child permanency.** Although child safety is crucial, interventions must also aim at maintaining or creating permanency in living arrangements and emotional attachments for the child. This outcome stresses reasonable efforts to prevent removal and to reunify families, when it is safe and appropriate to do so, and the timely adoption or other permanent placement of children when it is not.
- **Child well-being.** The general well-being of children in the child welfare system is also important, especially that of children in substitute care. This concern requires assessment of children's physical and mental health, educational, and other needs, and the provision of appropriate preventive or treatment services.
- **Family well-being.** Families need to function at a basic level to provide safe and permanent environments their children. Caseworkers are expected to facilitate change to enable the family can meet its own basic needs and assure family safety.

Source: **Child Protective Services: A Guide for Caseworkers, 2003.**

Author(s): Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (DHHS)

DePanfilis, SalusYear Published: 2003

Placement Options for Children

■ Temporary

■ Options

- Supervised Home Placement
- Relative Placement
- Foster Placement (family or group home)
- Residential Placement
- Other

■ Permanent

■ Options

- Adoption
- Long Term Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- PPLA
- Group Home
- Other Custody/Guardianship Arrangements

Placement Statistics

Children in, entering, and exiting care

- **Point in Time.** As of September 30, 2001, there were an estimated 542,000 children in foster care.
- **Entries.** During FY 2001, 290,000 children entered foster care.
- **Exits.** During FY 2001, 263,000 children exited foster care.
- **Trends.** Between 1998 and 2001, entries into foster care stayed relatively stable, while exits increased slightly (15,000) and the number of children in care at any one point in time dropped slightly (18,000).

Placement Types

- **Point in Time.** Of the estimated 542,000 children in foster care as of September 30, 2001: 48 percent were in foster family homes (non-relative), 24 percent were in relative foster homes, 18 percent were in group homes or institutions, 4 percent were in pre-adoptive homes, and 6 percent were in other placement types.
- **Trends.** Placement type at any given point in time remained relatively unchanged between 1998 and 2001. Placement in relative foster homes showed the largest change, dropping 5 percentage points.

Source: **Foster Care National Statistics**
Author(s): National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)
Year Published: 2003

Placement Statistics

Permanency Goals

- **Point in Time.** Of the estimated 542,000 children in foster care as of September 30, 2001: 44 percent had a goal of reunification, 22 percent had a goal of adoption, 8 percent had a goal of living with a relative or guardian, 8 percent had a goal of long-term foster care, 6 percent had a goal of emancipation, and 11 percent had not yet established a permanency goal.
- **Trends.** The most dramatic change between 1998 and 2001 occurred in the proportion of children in the "No Goal Established" category, which posted a decrease of 12 percentage points.

Outcomes

- **Exits.** Of the estimated 263,000 children who exited foster care during FY 2001: 57 percent were reunified, 18 percent were adopted, 13 percent went to live with a relative or guardian, 7 percent were emancipated, and 5 percent had other outcomes.
- **Trends.** The percentages of children leaving foster care to live with relatives, guardians, or adoptive families increased slightly between 1998 and 2001, while exits to reunification decreased by 5 percentage points.

Source: Foster Care National Statistics

Author(s): National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)

Year Published: 2003

Placement Statistics

Descriptive Information

■ Age

- **Point in Time.** The median age of the children in foster care on September 30, 2001 was 10.6 years.
- **Entries.** The median age of children entering foster care during FY 2001 was 8.7 years.
- **Exits.** The median age of children exiting foster care during FY 2001 was 10.2 years.
- **Trends.** The age at entry and exit stayed relatively stable between 1998 and 2001, while the median age of all children in care at a given point in time increased by 1.1 years.

■ Race/Ethnicity

- **Point in Time.** Of the estimated 542,000 children in foster care as of September 30, 2001: 38 percent were Black/Non-Hispanic; 37 percent were White/Non-Hispanic; 17 percent were Hispanic; and 8 percent were other races/ethnic origins.
- **Trends.** The percentage of Black/Non-Hispanic children in care at any given time dropped 6 percentage points (from 44 to 38 percent) between 1998 and 2001; rates for all other race/ethnicity categories increased slightly.

Source: Foster Care National Statistics

Author(s): National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (DHHS)

Year Published: 2003

Foster Care as an Option

Foster care is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 45, Volume 4, Part 1355, Section 57 as "24-hour substitute care for children outside their own homes. The reporting system includes all children who have or had been in foster care at least 24 hours. The foster care settings include, but are not limited to family foster homes, relative foster homes (whether payments are being made or not), group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes."

The Foster Care System

Foster care is intended to protect children from serious harm and to provide a temporary sanctuary on the way to – or back to – a safe, permanent home.

The Foster Care System

Why Children Enter Foster Care

- The circumstances prompting a child's entry into foster care have deep, complex roots.
- Generally, neglected and abused children make up the largest number of cases, with circumstances often exacerbated by the effects of mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence and poverty.
 - Sixty percent of children in foster care for one year are there because of neglect (Nat. Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being)
 - Thirty-two percent are in foster care as a result of abuse (Nat. Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being)
 - Eight percent enter foster care for such issues such as the need for mental health services, for domestic violence, or because of disability

The Foster Care System

Foster Care vs. In Home Services

- While every child's circumstances differ, whether to place a child in foster care may be assessed in comparison with whether it is in the child's best interests to remain in the home with services such as the following provided in conjunction with the in-home supervised placement:
 - Services and support to help families in crisis
 - Access to education to strengthen parenting skills
 - Assistance in overcoming addiction(s)
 - Shelter from domestic abuse
 - Access to mental health treatment and medication
 - Assistance with employment and housing opportunities

The Foster Care System

Needs of Foster Children

- Children who enter foster care have a variety of immediate needs that include:
 - Food and Shelter
 - Nurturing and Caring Relationships with an adult
 - Medical and psychological attention to address neglected health concerns
 - Therapists to help them cope with the trauma of abuse or neglect
 - Tutors or special-education services to help remedy learning gaps
 - They may require specialized play therapy, speech therapy or physical therapy
 - They may also require medication to treat anxiety, depression, attention-deficit or attachment disorders.

The Foster Care System

Needs of Foster Children

- Children in foster care also have a pressing need for long term follow-up services, including:
 - Ongoing support and attention upon re-unification with birth family to help ensure a smoother transition back into their lifestyle and neighborhood.
 - Assistance from therapists, teachers and others to help heal the wounds of separation
 - Education assistance, instruction in independent living skills, and mentors, as they either “age out” or make the transition from foster care to living on their own.
 - Programs focused on teaching various tasks such as finding an apartment, drafting a resume, going on a job interview

The Foster Care System

Positives of Foster Care Placement

- Foster care is intended to provide protection from abuse and neglect and give support and stability until children can return home safely or be placed for adoption or other permanent placement
- Social workers may be significantly more involved and able to improve a child's conditions
- Some siblings are able to be placed into foster homes together
- Social workers who are more involved can ensure that siblings and family members are able to meet more frequently

The Foster Care System

Foster Care Placement Issues

- The longer a child remains in foster care, the more likely that child will experience multiple placements.
- Difficulties for foster children:
 - More than twenty percent of children will live in at least three different placement settings; some will live in seven or more.
 - Multiple moves rupture relationships; interrupt schooling, delay medical care, and can derail a child's development.
 - The system makes it difficult for children to develop and maintain relationships with adults and other children.
 - Contact with immediate family is critical to a child's development; but in the foster care system, it is often times non-existent.
 - Foster children often lack a sense of social connection to adults or children in their new communities.

The Foster Care System

Foster Care Placement Issues

- Help often comes too late. In many cases, help for families in crisis comes too late – after the child has been placed in foster care
- Earlier intervention may have prevented the need for displacement or may enable for reunification with birth families quicker
- Early identification and intervention is critical for infants and young children whose signs of distress may be overlooked

The Foster Care System

Foster Care Placement Issues

- **Difficulties for Parents**
 - Lack of understanding about parent's rights in investigation and removal
 - The array of hearings, arbitrary time tables and unfamiliar legal language make it difficult for parents to understand their rights and the process.
 - Poor communication between social workers and the courts with the foster parents; regarding child's background, hearing dates, etc.

The Foster Care System

Foster Care Placement Issues

- Constant relocation of homes results in a number of problems:
 - Difficulty making friends
 - Having numerous social workers, result in children feeling no connection to anyone and having no sense of dependability on anyone
 - Inability to focus on learning as a result of changing schools
 - Loosing family and friends
 - Feeling depressed
 - Gaps in a child's development of social skills; negative impact on self-esteem
 - Lack of security
- The system's communication issues must be improved; including communicating to foster children where they are going and why.
- Children have few opportunities to ask questions or to receive age appropriate guidance.

The Foster Care System

- Financing Foster Care Needs
 - In Theory
 - Medicaid usually takes care of the child's physical and mental health care needs.
 - All adoption and foster children who are eligible for IV-E reimbursement are automatically eligible for Medicaid.

The Foster Care System

■ Financing Foster Care Needs

■ In Reality

- Foster children do not always receive the medical attention, medical health care and/or other services that they need.
- Not all health care providers are authorized to provide EPSDT screenings and diagnosis, and once prescribed they may be difficult to access.
- Many families try to bypass these difficulties by taking their children to their own family physician.
- However, many physicians do not accept Medicaid, and those that do may have a full patient load.
- Families are often forced to go to the public health office or community health clinic to have the children treated.
- Most youths' Medicaid coverage stops between the ages of 18-21.

The Foster Care System

■ The Legal Perspective

■ Involvement of the Judicial System

- When a child is placed in foster care, it is often as part of a court ordered reunification plan, with the child's return home made contingent upon a case plan that may include the following:
 - The parent's completion of a substance abuse program;
 - The parent attending parenting classes;
 - The parent and/or child utilizing mental health services;
 - The parent obtaining adequate employment and/or housing; or
 - The parent completing other requirements recommended by the social workers and approved by the judge.

The Foster Care System

■ The Legal Perspective

■ Barriers in the Judicial System

- The Court's involvement often creates an adversarial atmosphere: participants are viewed as opponents instead of members of a team working together for the good of the child.
- Parties seldom have the opportunity to sit down together to plan for the improvement of the home situation.
- Access to services may be impeded by obstacles such as:
 - Social workers lacking information on treatment/assistance sources.
 - Long waiting lists for court ordered services, such as substance abuse treatment
 - Unavailability of needed services in a particular area
 - Budgetary limits on provision of needed services
 - Transportation or scheduling difficulties, making attendance at ordered services difficult or impossible

The Foster Care System

- The Legal Perspective
 - Legal Representation of Foster Children
 - Congressional Acts
 - In 1974, Congress addressed the issue of child representation in dependency proceedings by passing the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).
 - CAPTA conditioned States' eligibility for grants, one of which mandated the appointment of a guardian ad litem (GAL) to any child who is the subject of abuse or neglect proceedings.
 - In 1996, Congress amended the statute to specify that a GAL may "be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate (or both) whose main purpose would be "(I) to obtain first-hand a clear understanding of the situation and the needs of the child; and (II) to make recommendations to the court concerning the best interest of the child."
 - In 2003, Congress added that GAL must receive training "appropriate to the role."
 - All 50 states and the District of Columbia have developed their own variations of the statutory provisions on the subject.

The Foster Care System

- The Legal Perspective

- Legal Representation of Foster Children

- Two Approaches to Child Representation

- “Best-Interests” Model

- Attorney must determine and advocate for the child’s best interests.

- The child’s wishes are often just one of the factors that the attorney takes into consideration when determining what is best for the child.

- Traditional Attorney-Client Model

- Attorney tries to represent the child as she or he would represent an adult client, allowing the child to determine the direction of the representation and advocating for the child-client’s wishes.

The Foster Care System

■ The Legal Perspective

■ Legal Representation of Foster Children

■ Attorney-Client Contact

- Due to large caseloads and inadequate number of available counsel, counsel representing a child might not meet the child prior to a hearing, consider the child's perspective, or give voice to the child's concern in court.
- Foster children frequently do not know their attorneys.
- Parents are often left on their own to make sense of the complex legal process.
- The extent to which foster children are involved in their own proceedings varies from state to state, case to case, and proceeding to proceeding. Some of the reasons include:
 - There are no legally binding uniform standards for the representation of foster children.
 - Federal law provides minimum guidance, which results in differing statutes across states and, thus, confusion.

The Foster Care System

■ The Legal Perspective

■ Legal Representation of Foster Children

■ Models of Child Advocacy Programs

■ Court Appointed Special Advocate Programs (CASA)

- CASA was founded in 1977 by a Seattle judge who recognized that attorneys did not have the time and resources to provide the in-depth investigation that the court needed to make a fully informed decision in dependency proceedings.
- CASA programs recruit, train and supervise volunteer GALs.
- Volunteers conduct investigations and make recommendations to the courts.
- The success of the program resulted in the growth of the CASA network, which has expanded into 930 local and 45 state wide programs as of 2003.

The Foster Care System

■ The Legal Perspective

■ Legal Representation of Foster Children

■ Models of Child Advocacy Programs

■ Institutional/Staff Attorney Programs

- Legal service offices or other non-profit organizations are often funded through the state, country, or municipality in which they are located, or through the court system.
- These services provide an attorney to represent the child, but the time of appointment will vary from program to program and case to case.
- The services typically have high caseloads, often resulting in poor quality representation and high turnover due to burnout.

Adoption as the Placement Option

For the majority of children unable to return home, adoption is the preferred permanency plan because:

- Adoption is a lifetime commitment to a child
- Adoption provides the sense of permanency and stability a child needs to develop into a healthy adult

Adoption as a Permanency Goal

Adoption may be a difficult placement for some children because of issues such as:

- the impact of past relationships and traumas on a child's behavior
- resistance to forming new attachments
- unresolved losses that make it difficult for the child to trust adults
- significant behavioral issues that are difficult to safely manage in a family setting
- special physical or emotional needs requiring ongoing treatment and/or therapy

Thorough Assessment is Critical in Making Adoption Placement Decisions

An assessment is critical in determining if adoption is an appropriate permanency option, and also provides information regarding the child's future needs and any challenges to a successful adoptive placement. The assessment helps the permanency worker to make an appropriate placement match and helps the prospective adoptive family make an informed decision about their ability to meet the unique needs of a specific child.

Adoption Legal Requirements

- Termination of Parental Rights (Voluntary or Involuntary)
- Home Study
- Matching/Assessment
- Placement of Child with Adoptive Family
- Consents (Knowing and Voluntary)
- Petition
- Notice and Hearing
- Order

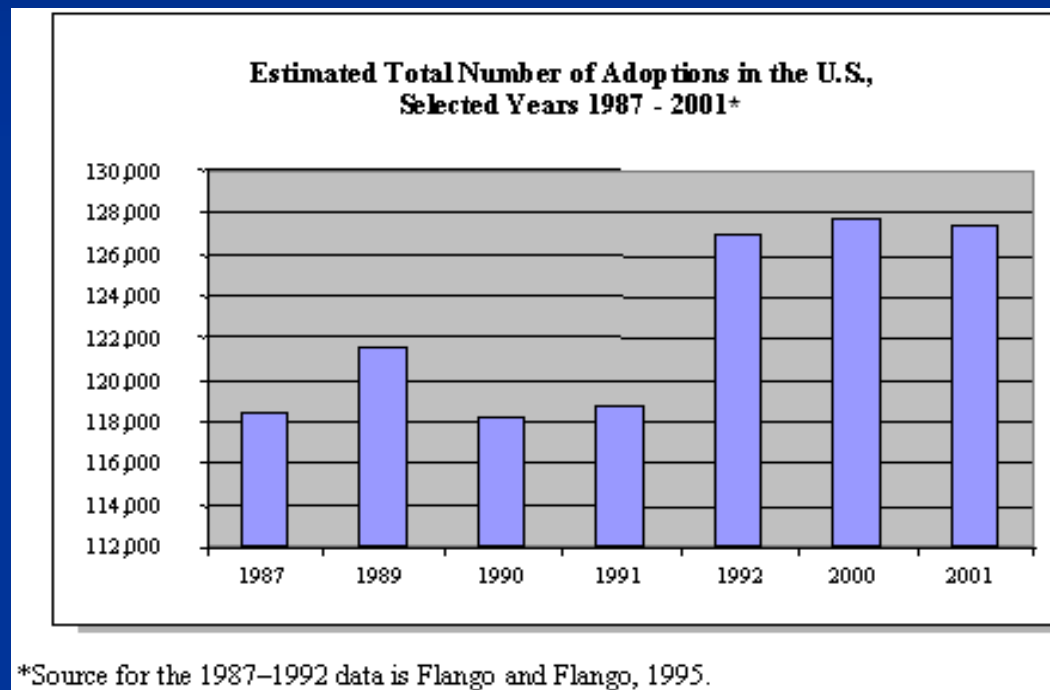
Additional Adoption Issues

- Special Needs Adoption
- Adoption Subsidy
- Open Adoption
- Post-Adoption Services
- Adoption Disruption/Dissolution
- Interstate Adoption
- Contested Adoption

Adoption Statistics

Source: National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (2004)

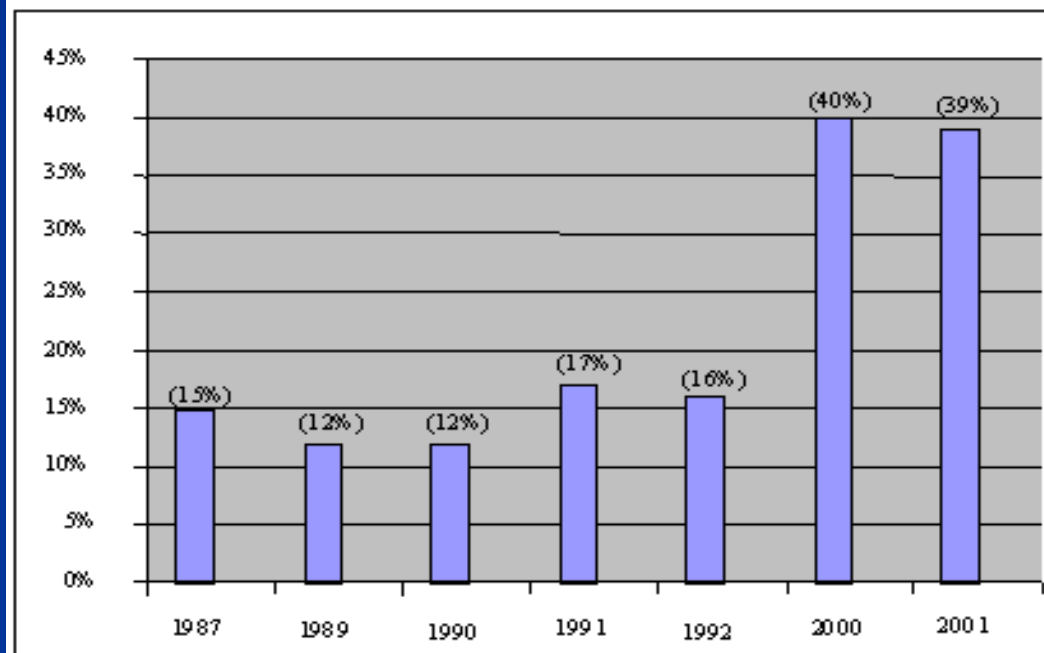
Total Adoptions



Adoption Statistics

Source: National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (2004)

**PERCENT OF TOTAL ADOPTIONS THAT WERE PUBLIC AGENCY ADOPTIONS,
SELECTED YEARS, 1987 – 2001
(CALIBER ASSOCIATES, 1998; TATARA, 1993)**



Data from 1987-1992 came from VCIS reports; data from 2000-2001 came from AFCARS reports.

Child Welfare Systemic Issues

■ Negatives for System Stakeholders

■ For Birth Parents

- Parents often feel vulnerable knowing they have not, or cannot, provide nurturing care for their children.
- They often feel sad, guilty, angry, unfairly judged or disrespected.
- Some feel as though they are viewed as lazy, uncaring and unfit, without being given a fair opportunity to be heard.

■ For Foster Parents

- Assumptions often arise that foster parents are only “in it for the money.”
- Foster parents have few rights in the foster/child relationship, making bonding emotionally risky for foster parents and children.

Child Welfare Systemic Issues

■ Negatives for System Stakeholders

■ For Child Welfare Professionals

- The appeal of becoming a social worker is minimized by low pay
- Caseloads are high, making best practice difficult in real life
- Burnout is frequent; criticism is common

■ For Foster Children

- Foster children can often feel or be perceived by society as “bad” children or somehow deserving of their fates
- Foster children frequently suffer from low self esteem, perceiving themselves as “lost causes”

Child Welfare Systemic Issues

■ The Cost of Professional Burnout

■ Issues in the Legal Field

- Judges are often well-versed in the law but are unfamiliar with child development.
- Courts often times lack the management tools, the staffing, and the time needed to make careful, informed decisions about the future of thousands of children.
- The burden on the judges and attorneys is enormous; whereby court systems struggle to create mechanisms through which all children can be monitored and their unique needs understood and considered as life-changing decisions are made for them.

Child Welfare Systemic Issues

■ The Cost of Professional Burnout

■ Issues in the Social Work Field

- Social workers often face numerous issues that make their crucial jobs difficult, which may include:
 - Understaffing and high turnover rates
 - Unmanageable case loads
 - Overwhelming responsibilities
 - Lack of access to ongoing, appropriate training
 - Limited knowledge of child development
 - Lack of good information systems to track and analyze caseloads
 - Racial/ethnic/cultural challenges in case practice
 - Extensive paperwork
 - Lack of crucial family information
 - De-sensitization
 - Heavy caseloads resulting in little time for family visits, assessments, assessments or decision-making

Child Welfare Systemic Issues

■ The Cost of Professional Burnout

■ Possible Solutions for both fields:

- Need for smaller caseloads
- More training for judges, lawyers and caseworkers
- Increase in salaries for social workers and high maintenance payments for foster parents can encourage more quality people to enter and remain in this field.

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)

- ASFA made significant changes to child welfare systems
 - Clarified that child's safety is first priority
 - Identified circumstances in which reasonable efforts to reunification may not be required due to child safety concerns
 - Entitled children to "reasonable efforts" to an adoptive home if they cannot reunify
 - Expressly allowed concurrent planning
- ASFA addressed three general concerns about the current child welfare system:
 - Children were remaining too long in foster care
 - The child welfare system was biased towards family preservation at the expense of children's safety and well-being
 - Inadequate attention and resources were devoted to adoption as a permanent placement option for abused and neglected children.

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

ASFA includes 3 key provisions to encourage states to move children from foster care into safe, permanent placements more quickly:

- A provision establishing exceptions to requirement that states make “reasonable efforts” to preserve and unify families, intended to give states flexibility and authority to expedite permanent placement under specific egregious circumstances (i.e., cases where parent has murdered the child’s sibling, or subjected the child to abandonment, torture or sexual abuse)
- A provision shortening the time frames under which states must make decisions about a child’s permanency. In particular, permanency decisions must now be made no later than 12 months after a placement, instead of the prior 18 month requirement (some states have shorter time frames)
- The “15 of 22” provision, which generally requires states to initiate the termination of parental rights (TPR) for children who have been in foster care for 15 of the previous 22 months; once TPR is initiated, states must make reasonable efforts to achieve permanency for the child.

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

- ASFA also contains provisions to facilitate adoption, including:
 - providing incentives to States for increasing the adoption rates for children with special needs
 - directing agencies to avoid delays in placement across state or county lines
 - making permanency an entitlement if “reasonable efforts” fail

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

■ Criticisms of ASFA

- Law rewards states for increasing adoption at the expense of reunification
- 12 months is inadequate time for addiction treatment, making reunification difficult, even when parents are cooperating
- 12 months is not enough time for indigent parents to comply with case plan requirements such as establishing housing and employment

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

- These trends following ASFA are viewed as positive by some, but not all:
 - Large increase in number of TPRs (concerns include creation of “legal orphan” status and hasty adoptive placements)
 - Increase in number of children with adoption as permanent case plan
 - Number of children in foster care increasing yearly

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

Congressional Efforts Post-ASFA

- Legislation that has been enacted since ASFA has focused on:
 - Providing independent living assistance to youth who transition out of the foster care system
 - Helping family courts achieve the permanency goals established by ASFA
 - Additionally, efforts to restructure child welfare financing have been introduced

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

Congressional Efforts Post-ASFA

- **Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act (SANCA, PL 106-314)**
- **Authorized a relatively small grant program for state and local courts to:**
 - **Reduce the backlog of abuse and neglect cases by hiring additional court personnel or lengthening court hours;**
 - **Improve individual case monitoring and expedite the flow of cases through the court system by automating case-tracking and data collection systems; and**
 - **Train Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers to give children support during the court proceedings.**

Federal Law Impacting the Child Welfare System

Congressional Efforts Post-ASFA

- Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (PL 106-169)
 - Replaced the Independent Living Program with the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)
 - CFCIP expanded the range of social services available to:
 - Former foster youth (age 21 or younger) who have aged out of the foster care system; and
 - Adolescents who are transitioning from foster care to self-sufficiency.
 - As amended in 2001, authorized services now include:
 - Vouchers for education and vocational training, up to \$5,000 per year;
 - Financial and housing assistance;
 - Counseling and other support services needed to help current and former foster youth successfully transition into independence
 - Additionally, CFCIP gives states the option to provide continuing Medicaid coverage to certain former foster youth, CFCIP was specifically designed as a *service* option for states, rather than a permanency option for foster youth

Website Resources

- **United States Department of Health and Human Services**
<http://www.hhs.gov>
- **The Children's Bureau – The Administration for Children and Families**
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>
- **Child Welfare League of America**
<http://www.cwla.org>
- **The Ohio State Bar Foundation**
<http://www.osbf.net/>
- **National Adoption Information Clearinghouse**
<http://www.calib.com/naic>
- **National Council For Adoption**
<http://www.adoptioncouncil.org>
- **National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice**
<http://www.cwresource.org/>
- **National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues**
<http://www.abanet.org/child/rcji/>
- **National Adoption Information Clearinghouse Links Page**
<http://www.calib.com/naic/links.cfm>
- **Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care**
<http://www.pewfostercare.org>
- **National Adoption Center**
<http://www.adopt.org>
- **Institute for Adoption Information**
<http://www.adoptioninformationinstitute.org>
- **Adopting.com - Internet Adoption Resources**
<http://www.adopting.com>
- **Children Awaiting Parents, Inc.**
<http://www.capbook.org>

“I think it’s important that a kid is just getting what he needs—food, health care, love. You really have to instill into a kid [that] . . . you have a right to be happy. You have a right not to be hit. You have a right to nourishment. You have a right to love. . . . I just think everybody deserves a family when they’re young.”

Luis, foster child, speaking in “*Voices from the Inside*,” by the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care (2004)